

Stevens Thomson Mason to Andrew Jackson, January 18, 1799, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

STEVENS THOMSON MASON TO JACKSON.

Philadelphia, January 18, 1799.

Dear Sir: Congress have yet passed no laws this Session on the discussion on the Bill for preventing interference with Executive authority a paper was brought forward by Harper purporting to be a memorial from an individual to the French Government, it was without Signature nor [would] he ascribe it to any body but plainly insinuated that it was from Dr Logan. There has been evidently a preconcerted design in the Prest and his party in Congress to foist it upon the public as such, and to use it as the means of existing [sic] prejudice against the Republicans of this Country generally and Mr Jefferson in particular. the true history of the paper¹ is that a Mr Codman a staunch Boston Federalist, wrote to his brother residing in or near Paris suggesting the Ideas contained in that paper, this brother threw those suggestions into the form of a memorial shewed it to Dr Logan and requested him to sign and present it to Tallerrand. Dr Logan conceiving such a step improper and that the paper was in some respects exceptionable refused to do so. Mr. Codman of Paris gave a copy of the paper to a Mr Woodward then about to return to one of the N England States on his arrival he waited on Mr Adams at Braintree and gave it to him. Mr A forwarded it to Pickering who furnished Harper with a copy, they probably being no other Member weak and wicked enough to become the instrume[nt to] such a low and dirty attempt.

1 This story of Logan's attempt to patch up the French quarrel is not supported by facts.

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Tho France is spoken of hear by our Executive men as in the inevitable road to ruin yet the Prest through his Sectys tell us, that, we must augment our Navy by the addition of 12 [vessels?] make up our frigates 12 and build 12 sloops of 18 guns² and that the Pt. must be authorized to augment the army to 50.000 men. As a proof of the flourishing state of our credit and finances and the ease with which we can embark in this trifling establishment the 5 million loan is opened at 8 PCt irredeamable for ten years the subscription to be paid in 8 monthly installments. The Prest has not yet given us the papers relative to France which he prom[ised] so long ago as the 8th of Decr why this delay and why the Legislature should be so trifeled with I know not these papers have been long since published in the Paris news papers which have lately arrived here and are said not to comport very well with his speach at the [op]ening of the Session.

² By an act of 1798 the navy had been enlarged from twelve to twenty-four vessels, including six frigates, twelve sloops of war, and six smaller vessels. See Hildreth, *Hist. of the U. S.*, IV. 222.

This day the Presdt sent us his long promised communication the reading of which is not finished in either House as far as we have gone in the Senate they appear very conciliatory on the part of France and I have no doubt we might have avoided war if J A had not been predetermined in favor of it.³

³ In this connection we may recall John Adams's saying that he desired no other epitaph than this: "Here lies John Adams, who took upon himself the responsibility of peace with France in the year 1800."

Yours sincerely